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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR S/ES - O/CMS - Office of Crisis Management Support

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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AMED](#) [KFLO](#) [AEMR](#) [AR](#)

SUBJECT: Embassy Buenos Aires Avian Influenza Tabletop  
Exercise and Updated Tripwires

Reference: (A) State 219189  
(B) State 220047  
(C) Buenos Aires 2914  
(D) Buenos Aires 3110

11. (U) Sensitive But Unclassified - Not For Internet  
Distribution.

12. (SBU) Summary: Embassy Buenos Aires' Avian Influenza  
(AI) Mission Task Force (MTF) conducted an AI mission  
specific tabletop exercise which was led by the PMO and  
included CLO, IRM, PAS and the MSG representatives on March  
2nd. Based on the results of this exercise, the MTF  
modified existing tripwires and included a specific tripwire  
for human-to-human transmission of AI as outlined in  
paragraph six. The revised tripwires represent a more  
plausible scenario in the event of a pandemic. End Summary.

13. (SBU) Based on the results of a March 2nd mission-  
specific tabletop exercise, Embassy Buenos Aires modified  
its existing avian influenza (AI) tripwires (see paragraph  
six). The changes include a specific tripwire for human-to-  
human transmission of AI. Participants in the tabletop  
included the Avian Influenza (AI) Mission Task Force (MTF),  
which is chaired by the DCM and composed of ESTH, MED, CONS,  
RSO, MGMT, MILGRP and FAS, along with representatives of  
CLO, IRM, PAS and the MSG.

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Tabletop Scenario  
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14. (SBU) During the tabletop exercise, led by the PMO,  
participants were asked to consider scenarios in which AI  
had been discovered in both Argentina and neighboring  
countries through animal-to-human transmission. The  
exercise also included situations in which an eligible  
family member (EFM) contracted AI, the disease becomes  
widespread in birds in Argentina, and human-to-human  
transmission is discovered in China. The participants  
determined that the appearance of human AI in Argentina  
through contact with animals could result in widespread  
panic, looting of drugstores, and a possible reduction in  
FSN staff reporting to work. If AI reaches pandemic  
proportions and appears in the U.S. before appearing in  
Argentina, airports and other modes of transportation will  
likely cease functioning. Since Buenos Aires serves as an  
air transportation hub for USG missions in several  
neighboring countries, Post may become the "safe-haven" for  
USG employees from those missions who are stranded in  
Argentina due to the shut-down of transportation services.

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Modified Tripwires  
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15. (SBU) In modifying the tripwires, the MTF factored in the fast transmission rate that would occur if the virus develops the ability to spread directly from human-to-human and the historically rapid geographical dispersion of pandemics, which would be magnified by the pace of modern air travel. As before, all tripwire responses have been made under the assumption that an effective human vaccine will not be available. Any of the tripwires discussed below could occur independently of each other. It is also possible that two or more tripwires could occur sequentially or simultaneously.

16. (SBU) Following are the Revised Tripwires and Responses:

Tripwire One: A substantial and sustained spike in the number and/or broadening geographic spread of animal-to-human cases anywhere in the world.

- EAC meets to confirm tripwire has been crossed.
- Provide Mission briefings for American and LES employees and dependents.
- Ensure that any public announcements or travel warnings issued are disseminated to American citizens in Argentina.
- Begin preparations for actions in Tripwire Two.

Tripwire Two: A spike in the number and/or broadening geographic spread of animal-to-human cases in Latin America (including Argentina).

- EAC meets to confirm tripwire has been crossed.
- Provide Mission briefings for American and LES employees and dependents.

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- Conduct a town hall meeting for US citizens in Argentina.
- Restrict official and unofficial travel to suspected areas.
- Consider authorized departure should cases of animal-to-human transmission of AI be confirmed in Argentina.
- Restrict incoming official travel to Argentina giving priority to personnel involved in investigative/containment efforts, or as otherwise deemed necessary by COM.
- Increase coordination with appropriate GOA ministries and schools.
- Begin plans to operate Embassy with reduced personnel in the event LES absences increase.
- Ensure that staff purchases sufficient supplies of food, water and other necessary domestic items for a shelter-in-place scenario and inform U.S. citizen community in Argentina of the need to do the same.
- Begin preparations for actions in Tripwire Three.

Tripwire Three: Confirmed human-to-human transmission of AI anywhere in the world.

- EAC meets to confirm tripwire has been crossed.
- Provide mission briefings (perhaps by phone or email) for American and LES employees and dependents.
- Ambassador to decide whether to request authorized or ordered departure of non-essential staff and family members. If this is not possible due to shutdown of airports or if the disease has already reached the U.S., non-essential staff and families should shelter in place. (It is probable that staff and family members will only have a limited time to depart Argentina. This will depend on the rate of dispersion of the disease and the pandemic-associated shutdown of national and regional airports.)
- IF AD/OD is not feasible, instruct all non-emergency American and LES staff to remain home on administrative leave. Children should remain home from school. Provide similar information to U.S. citizen community in Argentina.
- Cancel incoming official travel to Argentina except for personnel involved in investigative/containment efforts, or as otherwise deemed necessary by COM.

- Coordinate with CA/OCS on issuance of guidance (public announcement or travel warning, as appropriate) urging American citizens to defer all non-emergency travel to Argentina and particularly the affected regions.
- In coordination with the Department, prepare press guidance.
- Provide situation updates to Department as needed.
- Recommend social restrictions to staff and U.S. citizen community in Argentina (restrict movements of all personnel in the city; restrict dinner parties, participation in sporting events, etc.)
- Implement home quarantine of any staff or dependents that have been in contact with a person confirmed to have an AI infection and implement at-home monitoring procedure.
- Implement social distancing (limit movement of all personnel and dependents in the city) and inform U.S. citizen community in Argentina of the need to do the same.
- Plan for home visits to sick individuals who receive care under the Embassy health unit.
- Plan delivery service of food and other essential items to residences, as needed.
- Depending on level of public inquiries, Embassy staffs and equips a situation room. Consular officers should establish a database tracking American citizens who have been quarantined, hospitalized or ill at home. Also, prepare guidance for American citizen community on treatment options.
- Reduce consular operations to emergency consular services only.
- Consider segregating the Marine Security Guard detachment from the rest of the mission to decrease the risk of spread of the disease.
- Severely restrict visitor access to Mission.
- Consider prophylactic Tamiflu treatment only for staff required to be in direct contact with potentially infected persons and those at high risk if they develop the disease.
- Provide personal protective gear to staff required to have continuing contact with the general public.
- In the event of civil unrest, attempt to increase the size of the local guard force and the frequency of patrols to personal residences. If necessary, consider relocating personnel sheltering in place to a safer location.
- Prepare to provide safe haven in case members of other USG missions, who must transit Buenos Aires to return to the U.S., become stranded in Argentina due to airport closures.

Alternate Tripwire: Mission employee or eligible family member develops AI infection.

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#### Alternate Tripwire Response:

- Employee or eligible family member begins Tamiflu treatment.
- Medevac if possible; otherwise use local medical facilities and/or home quarantine patient and anyone who has had direct contact with patient.

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